



**Fostering Inclusivity: Evaluating the Influence of
Leadership Strategies on Cultivating a Diverse and
Inclusive School Culture in a Private School in Dubai**

**تعزيز الطابع الشمولي: تقييم تأثير استراتيجيات القيادة على تنمية ثقافة مدرسية
متنوعة وشاملة في مدرسة خاصة في دبي**

by

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This research evaluates the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in a private school in Dubai. The study employs an explanatory mixed-methods case study approach, which involves a close-ended questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 41 teachers and semi-structured questionnaires for qualitative data from three key school leaders. The results indicate that an inclusive school environment is significantly influenced by effective leadership strategies, including cultural celebration initiatives and continuous professional development. Despite the challenges in implementation, the teachers reported favourable perceptions of the leadership's initiatives to encourage diversity. The research concludes that inclusive leadership practices are essential for addressing the diverse needs of students, and it recommends that additional research investigate these strategies in a variety of educational contexts. These results have significant implications for educational leadership and policy, underscoring the necessity of continuous support and development to maintain an inclusive school culture.

Keywords: inclusivity, leadership strategies, school culture

خلاصة

يقيم هذا البحث تأثير استراتيجيات القيادة على تعزيز ثقافة المدارس الشاملة في مدرسة خاصة في دبي. وتستخدم الدراسة نهج دراسة الحالة الاستكشافي في إطار منهجي متعدد الاساليب، يتضمن استبياناً مغلقاً أي ذواجابات محددة لجمع البيانات الكمية من 41 معلماً واستبيانات شبه منظمة للحصول على بيانات نوعية من ثلاثة من قادة المدرسة الرئيسيين. وتشير النتائج إلى أن البيئة المدرسية الشاملة للجميع تتأثر إلى حد كبير باستراتيجيات القيادة الفعالة، بما في ذلك مبادرات الاحتفال الثقافي والتطوير المهني المستمر. وعلى الرغم من التحديات التي تواجه التنفيذ، أفاد المدرسون عن تصورات إيجابية لمبادرات القيادة الرامية إلى تشجيع التنوع. ويخلص البحث إلى أن ممارسات القيادة الشاملة ضرورية لتلبية الاحتياجات المتنوعة للطلاب، ويوصي بإجراء بحوث إضافية للتحقيق في هذه الاستراتيجيات في مجموعة متنوعة من السياقات التعليمية. وتترتب على هذه النتائج آثار كبيرة على القيادة والسياسات التعليمية، مما يؤكد ضرورة استمرار الدعم والتنمية للحفاظ على ثقافة مدرسية شاملة للجميع.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الشمولية، واستراتيجيات القيادة، والثقافة المدرسية

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my devoted husband, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my source of strength during this endeavor. I am motivated and filled with joy by the patience and understanding of my three marvelous children, Kenan, Maria, and Rayan. I am also profoundly appreciative of my parents' unwavering love, support, and confidence in me. This accomplishment has been facilitated by your assistance and sacrifices. I am grateful to each of you for serving as my sources of inspiration and fortitude.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Leadership in education is crucial for establishing a learning environment that promotes inclusivity and sets the standard for progress (Alkaabi et al., 2022). The UAE Vision 2021 emphasises the importance of constructing an inclusive society that provides high-quality education to all students, including those with disabilities (Kouki & Al, 2022). The goal entails the creation of a society that is both tolerant and harmonious, where people's diversity is embraced and accepted. The vision aims to establish an education system of exceptional quality that fosters both academic excellence and socially inclusive values (Kouki & Al, 2022). This aligns with the global education agenda outlined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which seeks to provide quality and inclusive education to all individuals by the year 2030 (Ossai, 2022). There is a worldwide push for the creation of education systems that deliberately include all learners, regardless of their backgrounds. The "Salamanca Statement" of 1994 and the "Education for All" goals, which countries have committed to, emphasise the significance of adopting a more inclusive approach to education (UNESCO, 2024). These international treaties and declarations oblige the global community to provide and guarantee inclusive education for all children worldwide (Elshazly, 2023). Inclusivity refers to the act of guaranteeing that the diverse requirements and ambitions of persons from all communities are recognised and adequately assisted, hence promoting a functional and lively intercultural society (Elshazly, 2023). However, to establish a society that values inclusion and social justice, significant efforts must be made to ensure that current and future school leaders

possess the necessary skills to effectively guide the process of creating a more inclusive educational institution (Alkaabi et al., 2022).

Inclusivity refers to the act or condition of incorporating or being incorporated into a group or framework (Younis, 2020). The need to establish an inclusive educational community and foster an inclusive culture and ethos is highly emphasised in education (Younis, 2020). Cultural competence in education is now recognised as a crucial topic in modern educational discussions (Alzarouni, 2022). Its goal is to establish inclusive learning environments that value diversity and provide fair opportunities for all students (Chima Abimbola Eden, Onyebuchi Nneamaka Chisom, & Idowu Sulaimon Adeniyi, 2024). The aim of this research is to examine tactics for enhancing cultural proficiency in education and cultivating awareness of inclusivity and diversity within educational environments. Being a multicultural metropolis, Dubai has a population consisting of around 85% expatriates from more than 200 different nationalities (Dubai Population 2024, 2024). Inclusivity in education is not just a topic of educational discussion, but also a vital factor that significantly affects our society and future (Alzarouni, 2022). Given the consistent influx of young families moving to the UAE annually, it is crucial to comprehend the significance of effective inclusivity and leadership in cultural matters within Dubai schools (Abusenenh, 2022). The objective of this research is to assess the existing culture in a private school in Dubai, gauge the efficacy of different leadership approaches in promoting inclusivity, and determine the specific characteristics influenced by these tactics. Through the identification of the genuine influence of leadership strategies, our aim is to not only to contribute novel insights to the academic community, but also to offer practical suggestions for school leaders and policymakers to

enhance their effectiveness in fostering genuine and significant inclusive practices and culture in Dubai's diverse private schools.

In the context of a diverse and rapidly developing environment, the study is conducted in an American private school based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The school has a student population of 1,500 pupils from over 40 countries, which creates a diverse and globally minded community. The presence of multiple cultures in this environment offers both advantages and difficulties in promoting inclusiveness and nurturing a sense of belonging among students from various origins (Akbar et al., 2023). In addition, the school benefits from a committed faculty of 100 teachers and leaders, who have a crucial role in moulding the educational experiences and fostering the growth of students within this dynamic environment.

Within the setting of a multicultural private school in Dubai, which prides itself on having a diverse student body representing over 40 countries, school officials face urgent challenges as they strive to promote inclusivity. One challenge involves efficiently meeting the unique language and cultural requirements of students from a wide range of backgrounds. The presence of language barriers and cultural differences can present substantial obstacles to the establishment of an inclusive learning environment that fosters a sense of value and support for all students (DeMatthews et al., 2021). In addition, school leaders face the challenging problem of addressing socio-economic inequalities among students and families in the school community. It is crucial to prioritise the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and support services to reduce these inequalities and foster inclusiveness (DeMatthews et al., 2021). In addition, promoting significant intercultural connections and discourse among students, staff, and families necessitates deliberate steps from school leaders to overcome differences and encourage comprehension and compassion across cultural boundaries

(Abuseneh, 2022). These problems highlight the significance of adopting culturally responsive practices and inclusive policies that acknowledge and appreciate the distinct capabilities and contributions of every individual in the school community (Badawieh, 2023; Keis, 2020).

The pressing necessity to tackle problems of inclusion and belonging in the school setting, as proven by actual instances within the research context community, provides a practical justification for undertaking this research study. A student's feelings of isolation and neglect because of language and cultural obstacles is just one example of the devastating effects of insufficient support for students from diverse backgrounds. Proactive steps must be taken to cultivate an environment of acceptance and belonging, as demonstrated by a student's case which happened in the research context, who resorted to physical aggression after experiencing miscommunication and discrimination. The safety of students is not the only thing these occurrences damage; they also threaten the unity and harmony of the school community. To tackle these urgent issues and help find solutions that work for all our students' diverse needs in the school, this research will look at how well leadership strategies promote inclusivity in the research context.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study can provide useful results unique to the setting of Dubai's schools. First, it can help school administrators make better decisions and implement more precise interventions by shedding light on successful leadership practices that promote diversity and inclusivity in the classroom. Secondly, the research can help shape professional development programmes that specifically target teachers to improve their cultural competence and inclusive teaching

methods by knowing how teachers perceive leadership's efforts to promote inclusivity. Thirdly, students' well-being, sense of belonging, and academic achievement can all be positively affected by school cultures that are more inclusive and diverse. Fourthly, schools that promote diversity and inclusivity tend to have better reputations in the community, which helps them draw in students from all levels of society and strengthens bonds within the community. Finally, this study fills a gap in our understanding of educational leadership and inclusivity, which can help guide future studies and recommendations for improving education in settings with a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to enact meaningful change within the research context by addressing pressing issues of belonging and inclusivity. This study seeks to support students from diverse cultural backgrounds by investigating the effectiveness of leadership strategies in promoting inclusivity. The goal is to provide actionable insights and practical solutions. The research context's real-life experiences demonstrate the critical need for this research by demonstrating the devastating effects of insufficient assistance for students coping with cultural and linguistic differences. This study aims to give school leaders the knowledge they need to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, and accepted by delving into effective leadership practices. In the end, this study's results could improve the students' lives, strengthen the research context of a school community, and lead to better opportunities for everyone.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

This research's main aim is to evaluate the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in a private school in Dubai.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the leadership strategies currently used in a private school in Dubai regarding the diversity of the students in the research context.
2. To determine the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in the research context.
3. To propose leadership strategies that can effectively foster inclusiveness in the research context.

The study aims to analyse how leadership strategies contribute to the promotion of inclusivity in private schools in Dubai. The research seeks to rigorously assess the effects of these measures on fostering a diverse and inclusive school culture.

This research aims to offer educators a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the leadership strategies employed to foster an inclusive school culture. By doing so, it will aid educators in effectively adjusting to shifts in the educational environment and embracing novel and progressive leadership methods. Additionally, it will highlight the significance of fostering a more comprehensive school culture and the responsibilities of different individuals involved in attaining this objective within the Dubai private school community.

1.4 Research Questions

After conducting an extensive literature review, the following research questions were set to guide this study. The primary research question is: "What is the influence of leadership strategies on cultivating a diverse and inclusive school culture in a private school in Dubai?".

The secondary research questions are as follows:

- "Which strategies for leadership are utilised to actively foster cultural inclusivity among the teachers, students, and staff in a private school in Dubai?"
- "How do the teachers perceive the efforts of leadership in promoting an inclusive culture in a private school in Dubai?"
- "How does diversity in the student population affect the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity?"
- "What practical techniques can be proposed to foster meaningful intercultural contacts and discourse, eventually improving inclusivity and equity within the school community?"

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This research study aims to thoroughly examine how leadership methods contribute to the promotion of inclusivity and the development of a varied and inclusive school culture at an American private school located in Dubai. The study seeks to investigate many aspects of leadership practices, such as decision-making procedures, communication tactics, and organisational endeavours, and their influence on fostering inclusivity among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, the research aims to comprehend the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, such as school administrators and educators, regarding the efficacy of various leadership strategies in establishing an inclusive educational setting. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise certain limitations inherent in the research's design. Initially, the research is limited to a solitary private school in Dubai, which may restrict the applicability of the results to different educational settings (Zainal, 2007). Furthermore, the study depends on data given by the participants and based on their subjective judgments. This could potentially lead to biases or mistakes in the results (Zainal, 2007). Additionally,

logistical limitations such as time limits, limited resources, and restricted access to participants might influence the extent and scope of the data gathered. Although there are limitations the study seeks to offer significant insights and recommendations for improving inclusivity in educational environments. This will contribute to the wider discussion on educational leadership and diversity (Cuyjet et al., 2023; DeMatthews et al., 2021; Lambrecht et al., 2022; Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020).

1.6 Structure of the Study

The study comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research by presenting the background and justification for the study, the significance of the study, the aim and objectives, the research questions, and the study's scope and limitations. Chapter 2 provides comprehensive information on diversity and inclusivity in education, leadership strategies for promoting inclusivity, obstacles to implementing inclusivity in diverse environments, and the most effective leadership strategies for fostering diversity and inclusivity. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, including the research approach, data collection, and analysis methods. It also addresses the importance of validity, reliability, ethical considerations, and researcher bias. Chapter 4 presents the primary findings and analysis. Chapter 5 conducts detailed discussions of the study's findings to fulfil the research objectives. Furthermore, it presents the final findings, limitations, and suggestions.

1.7 Summary of the Chapter

The UAE Vision 2021 aims to create an inclusive society that provides high-quality education to all students, including those with disabilities, in line with the global education agenda outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Ossai, 2022). Inclusivity ensures that the

diverse needs and ambitions of individuals from all communities are recognised and adequately assisted, promoting a functional and lively intercultural society. This study aims to assess the influence of school leadership techniques on promoting a more inclusive and varied school culture in private schools in Dubai, considering the expanding diversity and intricate character of student populations in foreign schools globally.

Inclusivity refers to the act or condition of incorporating or being incorporated into a group or framework. This research examines tactics for enhancing cultural proficiency in education and cultivating awareness of inclusivity and diversity within educational environments. By exploring different strategies and approaches, educators and educational leaders can improve their ability to create inclusive learning environments that value diversity and promote fairness and excellence for all students.

The study is conducted in an American private school with a diverse student body representing over 40 countries. School officials face urgent challenges in promoting inclusivity, such as efficiently meeting the unique language and cultural requirements of students from a wide range of backgrounds, addressing socio-economic inequities, and promoting significant intercultural connections and discourse among students, staff, and families.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is an essential part of this study, as it thoroughly examines previous research and conceptual and theoretical frameworks regarding the impact of leadership strategies on developing a diverse and inclusive school culture. Given the diverse student population of over 40 nationalities in an American private school in Dubai, it is important to recognise the significance and timeliness of understanding how leadership can promote inclusivity. This chapter methodically examines the relevant literature, starting with a general understanding of the conceptual and theoretical framework, and then exploring specific leadership strategies that have effectively encouraged diversity and inclusivity in educational settings. It is crucial to analyse the multiple factors that contribute to a positive school culture, including the influence of leadership in establishing a hospitable and encouraging atmosphere for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the review will examine the difficulties that leaders may encounter when implementing inclusive practices and propose possible solutions to overcome these barriers. Moreover, this review focuses on the circumstances of multicultural education in Dubai, providing valuable observations on the distinct challenges of implementing inclusive practices in a highly diverse environment.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The research aims to be based on a logical structure by framing theoretical concepts and explanations. It focuses on exploring the current literature on inclusivity in education, leadership strategies for promoting inclusivity, and school culture specifically in relation to leadership.

2.2.1 Inclusivity in Education

The concept of "inclusivity" in education is sometimes misunderstood as prioritising the needs of the majority at the expense of the minority (Dawson, 2020). True inclusion, on the other hand, pertains to enhancing the classroom experience for each student in concrete and measurable manners (Dawson, 2020). The apparent manifestation of inclusivity in education may appear evident and comprehensible to many individuals. Nevertheless, the concept has become increasingly intricate due to study and scholarly endeavours. Ruggiano (2017) emphasised that including studio-based learning, which involves research and internships, in higher education helps foster an inclusive learning environment. In education, inclusivity is defined by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) as a "democratic coexistence" (376). It refers to a learning environment that enables students from all cultures, races, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations to coexist and engage in lifelong learning. To attain this objective, the teacher must cultivate "active teaching styles" that foster student engagement and cater to a wide array of learning styles (Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995, 383). Ruggiano (2017) further asserted that the curriculum should be designed to reflect the extensive knowledge of the social-cultural groups that students bring to their study. Considering the broad and elusive nature of the definition of inclusivity, which also appears to differ across many contexts, extensive study has been undertaken to establish a more precise definition and practical consequences for design and education. Giesbers, Rienties, and Gijssels (2013) identified three primary dimensions of inclusivity: educational access, the learning process and completion, and the practical relevance for work and society. Inclusivity is defined as the degree to which diversity is utilised to enhance the learning outcome, where students are both

socially and academically involved in the learning process and where the results of the learning process contribute to their further development in society (Giesbers, Rienties, & Gijsselaers, 2013). Researchers determined that the assessment to be inclusive should be considered within three primary areas, encompassing the perspectives of students, educators, and the environment (Akbar et al., 2023). They contended that diversity is evident and primarily manifested in the student population, while inclusivity is a deliberate and ongoing process that needs to be actively cultivated as it does not happen spontaneously. They also suggested that the true effects of inclusivity on students' learning experience can be observed in the specific area of “the impact of inclusivity on the learning process” (Akbar et al., 2023). Acquiring a clear and comprehensive comprehension of a subject in the academic domain would empower educators to design a more efficient and customised teaching method to actively involve all pupils (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2021; Sanger, 2020; Rodríguez-Abitia et al., 2020).

Korn and Pratt (2013) argue that inclusion is not a guaranteed result in a diverse learning community. To promote a fully inclusive learning environment, the school administration must allocate adequate time and resources to engage in effective strategic planning and the execution of well-thought-out leadership plans (Eden et al., 2024). Inclusivity in school culture extends beyond the mere absence of overt animosity or antagonism between people or groups, and encompasses the active effort to ensure that a varied range of pupils are all able to coexist together (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024). The key concept in the emphasis on cultivating an inclusive school culture revolves around the notion of nurturing, upholding, and commemorating an authentic feeling of community, shared principles, and mutual objectives (Khreibi, 2022). Creating a genuinely inclusive

school atmosphere is not the responsibility of a single faculty member. The key to success rests in involving all staff members in a cohesive and persistent endeavour to transform the stated aims and moral ideals into a dynamic and multifaceted educational reality (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024). Regular occasions for collaborative professional development and the involvement of all members of the school community in constructive conversations and deliberations on the essence of inclusiveness are essential for achieving a successful, comprehensive implementation of inclusivity and authentic cultural enhancement (Sharma et al., 2021).

2.2.2 Leadership Strategies

Leadership strategies encompass the approaches, techniques, and actions employed by school leaders to guide and influence the behaviour and performance of individuals within the school community. These strategies may include setting a vision for inclusivity, fostering collaboration, providing support and resources, and modelling inclusive behaviours. Leadership strategies for promoting inclusivity can vary based on factors such as the unique contextual and cultural requirements of the student population, the existing academic and behavioural status of the school, the resources available, and the level of involvement with local community partnerships. The strategy employed by school leaders to promote inclusivity should be based on a strong commitment to protect and promote an ethical framework (Sharma et al., 2021). It should also demonstrate unwavering belief in the fundamental value of diversity, which should be nourished via openness and education. Zakharia et al. (2018) emphasised that embracing inclusivity is not a solution for issues like community segregation or inequality, nor is it a medical cure. Instead, it is a comprehensive collection of literature that

examines and celebrates the diverse ways in which students and teachers can engage in an ongoing and transformative process of learning and mutual respect. Interacting with a range of intellectual discussions on inclusion in education offers school leadership teams a chance to apply the insights from academic research to policy changes and innovative practices (Zakharia et al., 2018). To effectively promote an inclusive school culture, senior leaders should update the curriculum to incorporate current topics related to diversity and the development of crucial skills for civic engagement, such as critical thinking and pluralistic values (Khaleel et al., 2021). This proactive approach will transform the written commitment into a fully immersive and engaging learning experience for both students and staff.

2.2.3 School Culture

The school's culture approach considers diverse perspectives and broadens the knowledge of the issues by considering the variations in school culture among leaders within the same institution. When discussing this matter, it is advisable to employ Schein's (1992) definition of culture, which refers to the underlying and unspoken assumptions and beliefs held by members of an organisation. These assumptions and beliefs are ingrained over time and often go unexpressed, yet they form the foundation for how individuals behave and think within the organisation (Akpa et al., 2021). This will result in a more comprehensive comprehension of the culture that the leaders aim to envision and the culture that they are empowering to emerge. According to Hopkins (2001), this idea suggests there are multiple cultures within a school, just like in the surrounding district and society. Beliefs and traditions serve as distinguishing factors among staff members and diverse levels of senior leadership. However, the culture inside a school is also a deliberate result of leadership. This assertion is

backed by empirical data from Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2005), who discovered that the adoption of efficient organisational practices by principals was linked to the creation of a school culture that prioritises learning. This, in turn, fosters a positive internal environment and conducive conditions for teaching and learning (Poom-Valickis et al., 2022; Murchison, 2022; Sunil, 2023).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The research draws upon two theories to inform its comprehension and examination: Social Identity Theory and the Cultural Competence Hypothesis.

2.3.1 Social Identity Theory

The research incorporates social identity theory as an explanatory framework. Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a highly influential theory in the field of social psychology that has been applied in various domains, such as investigating variations in individual task performance, leadership approaches, and enhancing intergroup relations (Huddy, 2001). Moreover, SIT is beneficial when considering cross-cultural differences, such as the distinction between individualistic and collectivist cultures, in relation to the formation and maintenance of social identity (Huddy, 2001). This approach highlights the acknowledgment and validation of various identities and the significance of fostering cooperation between diverse groups. According to this theory, individuals possess numerous social identities that impact their attitudes, behaviours, and relationships. Leaders can foster an inclusive and supportive environment by recognising and appreciating the varied identities present within a group (Huddy, 2001). This approach encourages collaboration and cooperation among team

members. Shared values and aims are regarded as potent instruments for surmounting disparities and constructing robust intergroup partnerships (Huddy, 2001).

2.3.2 Cultural Competence Hypothesis

Cultural competence in education refers to the capacity of educators and educational institutions to proficiently engage with and assist individuals from various cultural backgrounds (Horvat et al., 2014). It includes a variety of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that empower educators to comprehend, value, and address cultural distinctions in significant manners (Horvat et al., 2014). The elements of cultural competence encompass being aware of and comprehending one's own cultural beliefs, biases, and assumptions, as well as those of others (Roysircar, 2004; Bennett, 2004); gaining knowledge about various cultural practices, traditions, histories, and worldviews; enhancing proficiency in communication, instruction, and fostering connections to enable successful cross-cultural engagements; exhibiting empathy, receptiveness, and reverence towards individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds; and modifying instructional methods, educational resources, and physical settings to accommodate the requirements and inclinations of a wide range of students (Roysircar, 2004; Bennett, 2004). Multiple theoretical frameworks inform the comprehension and advancement of cultural competence in education. These include a framework that delineates a continuum from cultural destructiveness, which involves denying the existence of cultural differences, to cultural proficiency, which entails actively seeking to comprehend and incorporate diverse cultures into educational practices (Gerrish & Azita Emami, 2006; Blanchet Garneau, 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Grant & Haynes, 1995). Based on critical theory, this framework highlights the significance of questioning power dynamics, privilege, and oppression in educational environments. It promotes the incorporation of a wide range of viewpoints and voices in the

curriculum and teaching methods (Gerrish & Azita Emami, 2006; Blanchet Garneau, 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Grant & Haynes, 1995). Cultural competence is essential in educational settings for multiple reasons. Firstly, it fosters inclusivity and equity by guaranteeing that all students feel valued, respected, and supported in their educational endeavours. Furthermore, it improves academic performance by offering culturally appropriate and responsive teaching methods that actively involve students from diverse backgrounds (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024). In addition, cultural competence promotes positive relationships among educators, students, families, and communities, resulting in a more collaborative and supportive learning environment (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024). In summary, cultural competence is crucial for equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in a diverse and interconnected global society (Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024).

Leaders with cultural competence can establish an inclusive atmosphere that embraces and incorporates people from various cultural origins (Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022). This involves modifying leadership tactics and initiatives to accommodate and appreciate diverse cultural views. The hypothesis acknowledges that diversity can improve the creativity, innovation, and overall performance within a company (Sapta et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2021).

2.4 Importance of Inclusivity in School Culture

Ensuring an inclusive school environment is a paramount objective for all educational institutions in our contemporary and diverse society, as it enables every student to get an equitable education (Lohbeck, 2020). This entails creating an academic setting that accommodates the unique requirements of everyone, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability (Pozas et al., 2021). An educational institution's

success is contingent upon an inclusive culture. That primarily benefits the staffing and faculty; it involves establishing a setting where the distinctiveness of each person is acknowledged and honoured (Pozas et al., 2021). For instance, by accommodating diverse languages, cultures, family arrangements, and individual interests, and by creating a curriculum that includes a broad array of instructional and educational components, we can effectively meet the needs of all students and staff members (Pozas et al., 2021). An inclusive culture in school is closely correlated with educational achievement (Pozas et al., 2021). There is ample evidence that students' self-perception, drive, and achievement are improved in schools where all students feel a sense of ownership (Lohbeck, 2020). For instance, a 2005 survey conducted by the Department for Education and Skills revealed that five-year-olds who acquire the belief that they possess the necessary skills and talents to exert influence on their surroundings are more likely to attain higher levels of achievement as they advance through the education system (Lohbeck, 2020). Additionally, the research revealed that distinct groups of pupils have specific advancements when an inclusive culture is established (Campbell, 2022; Anderson, 2023).

2.5 Leadership Strategies for Fostering Inclusivity

The analysed research indicates that a crucial leadership approach for fostering inclusivity in schools is to promote self-reflection among teachers and students (Baxter et al., 2021). This involves promoting self-reflection among individual educators and the entire student body, urging them to examine their own beliefs and practices, assess the potential impact of their actions on others, and analyse the structural inequities they may witness or encounter (Baxter et al., 2021). Nevertheless, self-reflection may be challenging, and the way

it is conducted is crucial for a successful approach. Specifically, research indicates that leaders or schools should engage in focused and critical reflection, rather than engaging in habitual or celebratory contemplation (Pathak et al., 2024).

Educators should be encouraged to consider their actions and motivations, the broader environment in which they operate, and the possible consequences for others (Pecci et al., 2020). Several scholars contend that self-reflection is essential for transformative learning, which entails prompting individuals to critically analyse and challenge not only their own actions but also the power dynamics within which they exist (Pecci et al., 2020). This approach emphasises that creating inclusive settings needs more than just altering practices; it necessitates a fundamental transformation in culture to ensure that diversity and equality are always prioritised and not disregarded (Pecci et al., 2020).

Some individuals contend that self-reflection, when employed as a means of evaluating present practices and the broader education system, is crucial for questioning established conventions that may impede inclusivity (Sandoval et al., 2021). The focus on regular critical reflection has been associated with successful and long-lasting organisational change, as it allows a school to cultivate an outward-looking approach see Appendix A, continuously striving to enhance itself and gain insights from its external surroundings (Weinberg et al., 2020). Several studies indicate that leadership techniques designed to foster inclusivity in a progressive and enduring manner should employ self-reflection to encourage broader social analysis and organisational transformation (Weinberg et al., 2020).

Leaders must exhibit a strong dedication to inclusiveness through their own actions and decision-making procedures (Shields, 2010). This entails proactively identifying and rectifying biases, promoting open and transparent communication, and deliberately striving to

amplify and appreciate the perspectives of underrepresented individuals (Shields, 2010). Moreover, leaders should consistently assess the influence of their initiatives and make necessary modifications, acknowledging that inclusion is a continual process that necessitates constant introspection and adjustment (Shields, 2010).

The ultimate objective of fostering inclusion in schools extends beyond simply the adherence to norms and regulations. Challenging systemic hurdles, fostering empathy and understanding, and creating a culture of belonging needs a collaborative endeavour where all individuals are appreciated and encouraged (Pecci et al., 2020).

2.5.1 Building an Inclusive Curriculum

Developing an all-encompassing curriculum is a crucial element in cultivating an all-inclusive school environment, especially in a diverse educational context such as the private schools in Dubai. An inclusive curriculum acknowledges and appreciates the varied backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints of all students, guaranteeing that educational content and practices are fair and reachable for all (Eden et al., 2024).

The essential components of a comprehensive curriculum that promotes inclusivity involve: Cultural Relevance and Responsiveness, Differentiated Instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Inclusive Language and Content, Collaborative Learning, and Critical Thinking and Social Justice Education.

An inclusive curriculum integrates materials and perspectives that mirror the cultural diversity of the student population. This encompasses written materials, illustrations, and real-life instances derived from diverse cultural and societal contexts. By doing this, it confirms the validity of the experiences of all students and promotes a feeling of inclusion (Sanger, 2020).

Differentiated instruction refers to the practice of customising teaching techniques and resources to suit the varied learning requirements and preferences of students (Smets et al., 2022). This could involve presenting multiple options for interacting with the material, offering diverse methods of evaluation, and granting students the opportunity to display their comprehension through various means (Smets et al., 2022).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that provides guidance for creating adaptable learning environments capable of accommodating the unique learning needs of individuals (Zhang et al., 2021). UDL, or Universal Design for Learning, facilitates the creation of an inclusive classroom environment by proactively anticipating and preparing for diverse learning needs. This approach ensures that all students have equitable opportunities for success (Zhang et al., 2021).

An inclusive curriculum ensures impartiality and avoids perpetuating stereotypes by employing language and content that are considerate and inclusive of all students (Saunders & Wong, 2020). This entails being cognisant of gender, ethnicity, religion, ability, and other facets of identity in educational resources and interactions (Saunders & Wong, 2020).

Promoting collaborative learning and group work can foster an appreciation for diverse perspectives and enhance students' ability to effectively collaborate with peers from various backgrounds (Lakkala et al., 2021). It fosters the development of crucial abilities like empathy, communication, and teamwork, which are necessary for cultivating an inclusive school culture (Lakkala et al., 2021).

The integration of critical thinking and social justice education in the curriculum fosters students' ability to challenge assumptions, comprehend systemic disparities, and actively promote societal transformation (Gorski & Dalton, 2020). This enables students to actively

participate in addressing matters of fairness and diversity, both within and outside the school setting (Gorski & Dalton, 2020).

Developing an inclusive curriculum is a continuous and evolving endeavour that necessitates dedication and cooperation from all individuals within the school community. Schools can foster an inclusive and supportive environment for all students by implementing a culturally responsive, accessible, and equitable curriculum (Eden et al., 2024; Landorf et al., 2023). This not only improves educational results but also fosters the growth of a more inclusive and harmonious school culture. Given the diverse student population of the private schools in Dubai, it is especially important to make significant efforts to promote a sense of belonging and inclusivity (Eden et al., 2024; Landorf et al., 2023).

2.5.2 Establishing a Secure and Nurturing Atmosphere

Creating a safe and supportive environment is essential for fostering inclusivity in a diverse educational community (Eden et al., 2024). Ensuring the safety, respect, and appreciation of every student, irrespective of their cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic backgrounds, is of utmost importance (Russell et al., 2021). Ensuring safety in the school environment extends beyond physical security to include emotional and psychological well-being (Eden et al., 2024).

School administrators play a crucial role in formulating policies and protocols that effectively deter bullying, discrimination, and harassment (McQuillan & Mayo, 2024). It is crucial to effectively communicate and consistently implement these policies to cultivate an atmosphere characterised by trust and respect. An inclusive environment refers to a setting in

which students can openly and confidently express their identities without concerns about prejudice or negative consequences (McQuillan & Mayo, 2024).

The support structures within the school, including counselling services, peer support programmes, and mentorship opportunities, are crucial for addressing the diverse needs of students (Brashear & Thomas, 2022; Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). For example, employing counsellors who possess cultural competence and comprehend the distinct obstacles encountered by students from diverse backgrounds can significantly enhance the assistance offered. Furthermore, peer support initiatives that encourage students to assist one another can foster a feeling of camaraderie and inclusion (Brashear & Thomas, 2022; Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022).

Continuing the professional development of teachers and staff is another vital aspect. Consistent training in cultural competency and inclusive teaching practices provides educators with the essential skills to recognise and tackle the varied needs of their students (Brottman et al., 2020). Educators who possess awareness and understanding of cultural differences are more adept at creating inclusive learning environments that foster the success of all students. It is equally crucial to engage the wider school community, which includes the parents and guardians (Brottman et al., 2020; Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2020; Fuentes et al., 2021).

Schools can organise workshops and events that promote and honour cultural diversity, thereby facilitating interaction and comprehension among diverse cultural groups. This not only aids students but also fosters a more comprehensive school community (Brottman et al., 2020; Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2020; Fuentes et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the utilisation of inclusive curriculum and teaching materials that accurately represent the varied backgrounds of students has the potential to enhance the

feeling of belonging (Cerna et al., 2021; Vantieghem et al., 2020). When students encounter their cultures and experiences reflected in the curriculum, it affirms their identities and fosters increased involvement in the learning process.

To summarise, establishing a secure and encouraging atmosphere necessitates a thorough strategy that includes strong policies, support systems, training for professionals, community engagement, and an inclusive educational programme (Cerna et al., 2021; Vantieghem et al., 2020). School leaders must exhibit a proactive and unwavering commitment to fostering an environment that ensures every student experiences a sense of security, support, and worth. This not only enhances the overall well-being of students but also fosters a more cohesive and inclusive school culture.

2.5.3 Providing Employee Training Programmes

Staff professional development plays a vital role in cultivating an inclusive and diverse school culture (Eden et al., 2024; Schipper et al., 2020). Efficient professional development initiatives provide educators with the requisite knowledge, competencies, and mindsets to comprehend and embrace cultural diversity, thereby fostering inclusivity within the school setting (Eden et al., 2024; Schipper et al., 2020). The following sections present several crucial elements of delivering professional development for staff to foster diversity.

2.5.3.1 Awareness and Sensitivity Training. Professional development programmes ought to incorporate instructional sessions that enhance understanding regarding the significance of diversity and inclusion (Romijn et al., 2021). These sessions can enhance educators' comprehension of their students' cultural backgrounds, traditions, and experiences, fostering cultural sensitivity and mitigating biases. Educators can foster inclusivity in their

lesson plans and classroom activities by enhancing awareness and ensuring they reflect and honour the diverse backgrounds of their students (Romijn et al., 2021).

2.5.3.2 Inclusive Teaching Practices. Professional development should prioritise the provision of inclusive teaching practices that can effectively cater to the diverse learning needs and styles of teachers (Donath et al., 2023; Henry & Namhla, 2020). This encompasses instruction in differentiated teaching methods, culturally sensitive pedagogy, and techniques to assist English language learners. Educators must acquire the skills to modify their instructional approaches to enable all students, irrespective of their cultural or linguistic heritage, to effectively access and participate in the curriculum (Donath et al., 2023; Henry & Namhla, 2020).

2.5.3.3 Addressing Unconscious Bias. Unconscious bias has a substantial influence on teacher–student interactions and student outcomes (Villaran Zariquiey, 2022). Professional development programmes ought to incorporate workshops focused on identifying and remedying unconscious biases (Villaran Zariquiey, 2022). Teachers can acquire techniques to recognise and minimise their own prejudices, guaranteeing that every student is treated fairly and provided with equal chances to thrive (Villaran Zariquiey, 2022).

Facilitating professional growth opportunities for employees to foster diversity is crucial for nurturing an inclusive school environment (Eden et al., 2024; Schipper et al., 2020). Schools can foster an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported by increasing awareness, providing educators with inclusive teaching practices, and actively addressing unconscious bias.

2.6 Diversity and Inclusivity in the Dubai Educational Context

Education in Dubai historically revolved around religious schools that were divided by gender and not mandatory for boys, let alone girls. Before 1960, most teachers were foreign, resulting in the establishment of a varied community of educational enterprises (Kippels, 2024). The inception of the formal education system in the 1960s, under the leadership of Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, marked the commencement of the modern era of education in the Emirate (Younis, 2020). This development was a result of Sheikh Rashid's strong interest and visionary approach. The pace of improvement was sluggish until the late 1980s, when the country experienced a surge in economic growth, leading to a heightened need for schools. During this period, the private school sector in Dubai experienced significant growth (Younis, 2020). Presently, out of the 128 private schools in Dubai, a mere 4 are government-based and get funding from the state. By contrast, the number of expatriate children has doubled over the past 50 years, increasing to 260,000 students from around 180 countries today (Younis, 2020). Dubai is becoming a global civilisation that is experiencing rapid growth. It has a diversified population with people from different nationalities, cultures, and religions. The teaching staff in private schools is growing more multicultural and international (Younis, 2020). Given the lack of cultural limitations, the future of education in Dubai will prioritise fostering a diversified atmosphere in line with the worldwide trend towards globalisation (Younis, 2020).

The progress of education and inclusivity in Dubai has been significant. The Non-Native English Speaker Programme, which was introduced in 2009, aimed to provide additional help to more than 40% of students in the private school sector who were learning in a first language other than Arabic (Bray & Ventura, 2022). In recent years, efforts have been made to redefine

the treatment and facilities for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). These efforts are essential for building an inclusive environment in schools, but they are still in the phase of developing the necessary infrastructure (Dawson & Heylin, 2022).

Following these developments, numerous accounts illustrate the educational, individual, and societal consequences for various nations due to the impression of either subtle or explicit bias within the school setting (Alzarouni, 2022). This phenomenon is particularly evident in the private school industry, reflecting the extensive range of variety and culture-specific principles that exist inside the country (Alzarouni, 2022). According to Albert Bandura, a well-known psychologist specialising in social cognition and cultural studies, children are extremely susceptible to influence and can be shaped by their surroundings based on their observations of others' behaviour and how they are treated (Stajkovic & Sergent, 2019). Given the current situation, it is crucial to analyse the leadership tactics employed in private schools regarding the cultural diversity and inclusive treatment of all pupils (Alzarouni, 2022). It is also vital to evaluate the characteristics of cross-border schools that have a mobile population of pupils and teachers from different countries (Le Renard, 2021).

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities in Fostering Inclusivity in Dubai's Private Schools

In a recent development, the United Arab Emirates and the Dubai Ministry of Education made a pledge to enhance the quality of private education in Dubai by the year 2021. One significant objective is to achieve a 5% rise in the enrolment of Emirati students in private schools (Bray & Ventura, 2022). This is aimed at enhancing their education and self-assurance, as well as promoting the integration and acceptance of Emiratis within the UAE's diverse cultural community (Bray & Ventura, 2022). Furthermore, The Knowledge and

Human Development Authority, under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum's vision, has invited all teaching and administrative staff to participate in cultural competency training programmes (Davis, 2024). The aim is to cultivate a new generation of educators who are acutely aware of and receptive to the requirements of students from diverse cultural backgrounds ((Davis, 2024).

Dubai is home to a diverse array of nationalities and cultures, each with its distinct traditions and customs (Grover, 2022). However, despite the familiarity of international and private schools with the concept of a global citizen environment, this circumstance leads to a "culture clash" (Marquez et al., 2022) see Appendix A. The concept of a global citizen, someone who identifies themselves as a member of a diverse global community and possesses the moral and intellectual qualities to act responsibly, is frequently misunderstood as globalisation, the process of integrating cultures worldwide. Consequently, many schools lack the necessary resources to effectively address this diversity on a profound level, leading to students feeling disconnected from their own cultures (Bray & Ventura, 2022).

Challenges might emerge from different origins, such as systematic disparities, cultural prejudices, and limitations in resources (Alzarouni H., 2022). Addressing the varying requirements of children from various cultural backgrounds and abilities can be a complex task that necessitates meticulous planning and customised solutions (Alzarouni H., 2022). Obstacles to developing diversity may arise from language limitations, socio-economic differences, and discriminatory attitudes (Abacioglu et al., 2020). Moreover, the reluctance to embrace change or the absence of understanding on the significance of inclusivity among the individuals involved might impede advancement (Ray, 2023; Abacioglu et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, within these difficulties exist prospects for significant metamorphosis and advancement. Schools may foster more supportive and inviting environments for all students by identifying and resolving obstacles to inclusivity (Bryan et al., 2020). Promoting inclusivity can be facilitated through community partnerships, staff training programmes, and the adoption of inclusive policies and practices (Bryan et al., 2020). Valuing diversity and cultivating a culture of empathy and respect can enhance students' feeling of belonging and positively impact their academic and social-emotional growth (Kiradoo, 2022). Furthermore, progress in technology and the availability of resources provide fresh opportunities for reaching and assisting learners from various backgrounds (Gould et al., 2020).

2.8 Best Practices and Recommendations for Inclusive Leadership

Best practices and suggestions for inclusive leadership involve implementing a variety of ways to establish fair and nurturing learning environments for all students (Russell et al., 2021). Inclusive leaders place a high priority on incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into their decision-making processes and organisational practices. They intentionally cultivate a culture that encourages respect, empathy, and a sense of belonging, creating an atmosphere where each child is esteemed and treated with respect (Russell et al., 2021). Competent inclusive leaders actively involve stakeholders, including students, parents, and staff, to comprehend their varied viewpoints and requirements, and integrate their feedback into the decision-making procedures (Russell et al., 2021). Additionally, they support policies and practices that encourage equal access and opportunities for all learners, particularly individuals from marginalised or underrepresented communities (Russell et al., 2021). Inclusive leaders allocate resources towards the professional development and training of their personnel to

improve their cultural competence and foster inclusive teaching practices (El-Amin, 2022). In addition, they establish systems and methods to tackle and resolve instances of discrimination, prejudice, and inequality within the school community. Inclusive leaders, via the embodiment of these ideas and behaviours, can significantly contribute to the development of a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational institutions (El-Amin, 2022). This, in turn, leads to positive outcomes for all students (Russell et al., 2021; El-Amin, 2022).

2.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the importance of leadership strategies in creating a diverse and inclusive school culture, especially in an American private school in Dubai. Inclusivity in education is defined as a "democratic coexistence" that allows students from all cultures, races, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations to coexist and engage in lifelong learning. Teachers must cultivate active teaching styles that foster student engagement and cater to a wide array of learning styles. Dubai's diverse population offers an ideal environment for promoting inclusivity in private schools. Effective strategic planning and well-thought-out leadership plans are required to ensure inclusion. Theories such as social identity, and the cultural competence hypothesis provide valuable insights into the role of education in facilitating social transformation and creating inclusive learning environments. Inclusive curriculum development, including cultural relevance, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, inclusive language and content, collaborative learning, and critical thinking and social justice education, is crucial for creating an inclusive school environment. Inclusive leaders allocate resources towards professional development and training, addressing discrimination, prejudice, and inequality within the school community.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed to evaluate the influence of leadership strategies on promoting inclusivity in an American private school in Dubai. The subsequent sections will delineate the research design, the process of recruiting participants, the procedures for collecting data, the methods employed for data analysis, the ethical considerations considered, and the limitations of the study. The research's main aim is to evaluate the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in a private school in Dubai. This research endeavours to offer valuable insights and recommendations for fostering inclusivity and diversity in private schools in Dubai, employing a meticulous and transparent methodology.

3.2 Research Design

This study aims to analyse and assess the leadership strategies implemented in a private school in Dubai. This examination seeks to elucidate the major influence that these strategies has on promoting inclusivity within the school's heterogeneous community. The research methodology used for this study is categorised as a rigorous and comprehensive explanatory mixed-methods case study.

An explanatory mixed-methods approach is a research design that integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a research problem (Dawadi et al., 2021). This methodology consists of two distinct stages: the gathering and examination of quantitative data, followed by the utilisation of these findings to guide the subsequent qualitative phase (Dawadi et al., 2021). In the quantitative

phase, surveys or experiments are conducted to ascertain patterns, trends, and relationships among variables. The qualitative phase, which may involve interviews, focus groups, or case studies, delves deeper into these findings, providing a contextual understanding, explaining the quantitative results, and offering insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants. The reason for selecting an explanatory mixed-methods approach is to utilise the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research (Dawadi et al., 2021). Quantitative data offer a wide scope and the ability to generalise, while qualitative data offer in-depth insights and a thorough understanding. This method is especially efficient for intricate research inquiries that necessitate the subtle analysis of findings (Dawadi et al., 2021). The utilisation of a mixed-methods approach has been empirically demonstrated to be a highly effective means of triangulating the findings and substantiating the data (Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2013). The main benefit of employing mixed research methods in the study is that it considers the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative research methods and maximises their potential (Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Concurrently, the researcher can counterbalance any limitations of both the quantitative and qualitative research methods (Dowd, 2018).

A case study is an in-depth examination of a particular occurrence or entity within its actual circumstances, and is frequently employed in educational research (Schoch, 2020). This approach entails handpicking a specific instance, collecting data from multiple sources, and scrutinising them to discern significant themes and patterns (Schoch, 2020).

The case study approach is a powerful method for analysing and emphasising important and comprehensive aspects of real-life events. In addition, researchers can gain valuable knowledge from the observations acquired through case studies, as they offer chances for meticulous examination within circumstances (Crowe et al., 2011; Fidel, 1984; Zainal, 2007).

In addition, case analysis is a versatile method that facilitates exploratory investigation, the comprehensive depiction of experiences, and analytical extrapolation (Gilson, 2012).

By utilising the mixed-methods case study, it is feasible to thoroughly examine the complex interactions and connections among different leadership practices and the advancement of inclusivity within the school's setting. The qualitative aspect of the study concentrates on obtaining comprehensive insights and nuanced viewpoints from leaders and stakeholders through interviews and focus groups. Creswell (2012) observed that qualitative research offers researchers greater adaptability in investigating emerging topics and enables the participants to shape the direction of the research and express their opinions without constraints. The qualitative component of the study offered a chance to cultivate a thorough comprehension of the practices and difficulties involved in inclusive education within the specific research setting. This comprehension was enhanced by examining detailed and descriptive data obtained from a semi-structured questionnaire. This data provided valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of leaders regarding how diversity within the school community affects the inclusivity strategies implemented by the leadership.

Additionally, the data shed light on the potential impact of these strategies on the overall school culture and the promotion of a sense of belonging and acceptance among students and staff, leading to a more inclusive and fair learning environment. Furthermore, they also aid in identifying potential areas for enhancement and development. School leaders can enhance inclusivity and create a supportive environment for all members of the school community by identifying these areas and implementing targeted strategies and interventions.

The quantitative element is an important part of this study, complementing and enhancing the qualitative component. It provides valuable numerical data. The inclusion of quantitative analysis strengthens and confirms the results obtained from qualitative methods, resulting in a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness and impact of leadership strategies on inclusivity. According to Ben-Eliyahu (2014), the quantitative approach to information collection seeks to analyse a phenomenon or relationship across a larger sample size of participants. It allows for the summarisation of characteristics across groups or relationships, which can then be analysed statistically. This methodology addresses many participants and aids researchers in identifying overarching patterns in relationships (Ben-Eliyahu, 2014). When determining the goals of this study, it is deemed more suitable to use quantitative methods to examine the viewpoints of 80 teachers regarding leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity within the research setting. The study seeks to identify any significant correlations or trends between specific leadership strategies and the perceived level of inclusivity among teachers in the school community through the analysis of quantitative data. This analysis yields valuable insights into the efficacy of various leadership approaches and their influence on fostering inclusivity within the school. It will enable school leaders to make well-informed decisions and implement evidence-based strategies to establish a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise and tackle the constraints in terms of time and resources when conducting primary data collection for this research endeavour. The research methodology and techniques for gathering data are specifically tailored to accommodate these limitations (Stoecker & Avila, 2021; Åkerblad et al., 2021).

3.3 Population and Participants

The study was conducted in an American private school located in Dubai. This school is renowned for its streamlined process of accepting new students and its ability to attract a diverse range of international students. With a student population of 1,500 pupils from over 40 different countries, the student body is diverse in nationalities, cultural backgrounds, spoken languages, and experiences. These factors create an ideal environment for promoting inclusivity and diversity within the school. This research focused on the teachers and school administrators within the school's targeted population. A semi-structured questionnaire was conducted with the school leaders and administrators, wherein all 10 individuals were sent the interview questions. The purpose was to gather their perspectives on the leadership strategies employed to foster inclusivity and cultivate a diverse and inclusive school culture. Only three leaders, namely the school principal, activities administrator, and school counsellor, responded to the interview questions. Despite the reduction in the number of participants from ten administrators who received the semi-structured interview to three administrators who agreed to answer the interview questions, the number of participants was feasible for contacting them and has resulted in collecting variable and dense data. These three leaders play a vital role in the decision-making processes that pertain to promoting diversity and inclusivity within the school community.

In addition to the semi-structured questionnaire conducted with the school leaders and administrators, the researcher also conducted a survey with the teachers. The goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the school's culture and the effectiveness of the leadership strategies in promoting inclusivity and diversity. The survey was sent to 80 teachers from all grade levels and different subjects, and 41 of them responded, resulting in a response rate of

51%. The teachers in the sample were selected using the self-selection sampling method. This sampling method is based on individuals willingly choosing to take part in the study, usually in response to an invitation or request for participants (Lehdonvirta et al., 2021). The leaders in the sample were selected using purposive sampling, also called judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or criteria directly related to the research question. This method ensures that the sample comprises individuals who possess specific knowledge, expertise, or roles essential to the study (Sukmawati et al., 2023). The study was executed over a period of four weeks from April through May 2024 in an American private school in Dubai, UAE.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The study focused on acquiring quantitative and qualitative data from various sources. The researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data by employing a combination of a semi-structured questionnaire (open-ended questions) and a survey (closed-ended questions) and).

3.4.1 Qualitative Data Instrument

The qualitative data were collected by using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire, which was answered by key individuals and individuals with an interest in the issue. The inquiries were sent through the school's official email system to each senior leader and stakeholder from the leader's sample. Before this, the school administration was consulted, and the necessary permissions and approvals were obtained. Each participant provided consent with the ethics of the interview and confidentiality form. It illustrated that their involvement is optional, and they have the freedom to discontinue their participation in the study at any point

without facing any repercussions. This interview method allows participants to answer questions freely, facilitating the research in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences (Jain, 2021; Taherdoost, 2021). In addition, employing an email open-ended questionnaire offers enhanced convenience and flexibility for the participants, enabling them to respond at their convenience and allocate sufficient time to furnish thoughtful and comprehensive answers (Jain, 2021; Taherdoost, 2021). This method helped avoid the potential weakness of qualitative interviewing related to researcher biases, which could affect the findings (Seidman, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The semi-structured questionnaire's questions were formulated based on the primary research questions of the study, which focused on three key areas. Firstly, the perspectives of the school leaders on the consequences of a diverse student population in the school community and the challenges encountered in a multicultural setting. Secondly, the tactics utilised by the school leaders to foster inclusivity within the school setting. Finally, exploring the most effective strategies and approaches used by the school leaders to create a welcoming environment that promotes a keen sense of belonging among students from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, each study question was split into three sub-questions, which aimed to gather specific and comprehensive information regarding these areas (Natow, 2020; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

3.4.2 Quantitative Data Instrument

The quantitative data instrument is a close-ended survey method. The survey was used to obtain a wide range of teachers' perspectives and insights on the school's efforts to promote inclusivity. The survey has been proven to be a practical tool for efficiently gathering a large

amount of data within a brief period (Creswell, 2007; Zapier, 2015). The questionnaires were distributed through the school's official WhatsApp group to facilitate their online administration. This survey contains comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, potential benefits, and steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The participants were notified that their involvement was optional, and they had the freedom to discontinue their participation in the study at any point without facing any repercussions.

The questionnaire has been partitioned into two sections. All questions in the two sections are close-ended. The initial section comprises 7 questions designed to gather demographic information from the participants, including their age, gender, grade level taught, education qualifications, level of education, and years of teaching experience. The second section consisted of 7 questions. The main goal of this section was to gain a thorough understanding of the teachers' perspectives on leadership strategies and how they contribute to promoting inclusivity in the educational setting. The survey also sought to collect feedback regarding the specific obstacles teachers encounter in promoting diversity and inclusivity, as well as their recommendations for enhancement. The survey was conducted using Google Forms. The collected data were subsequently analysed using statistical software to consolidate the findings and detect any noteworthy patterns or trends (El-Sofany & El-Haggar, 2020).

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Analysed separately, the data have been categorised into quantitative and qualitative forms. Statistical software was utilised to analyse the questionnaire data, while the thematic content analysis method was employed to analyse the interview results. Subsequently, the results obtained from both methods were compared and supplemented, resulting in the

validation and triangulation of the findings. The interview results were subjected to thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data (Pallant, 2020; Babbie et al., 2022).

3.5.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis was conducted using the thematic content analysis approach, which focuses on identifying patterns of meaning within a dataset (Creswell, 2014). The process emphasises inductive reasoning through the iterative analysis and comparison of data, resulting in the identification of recurring themes and the generation of knowledge (Morgan & Nica, 2020; Lester et al., 2020). Research has demonstrated that it is adaptable, readily available to researchers, and not limited by any predetermined data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gratton & Jones, 2009). Nevertheless, it is a time-consuming procedure as it requires a thorough examination of the material.

3.5.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed by statistical software to get the percentage of responses to each question in the survey, and to get an insight into the teachers' perspectives towards the research questions. 41 respondents were entered into the software and have been analysed.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of the Results

The aim of this study was to ascertain the methods employed by senior leaders and the school principal in a private school to promote inclusivity. To evaluate this, it was imperative to demonstrate the degree to which the participants perceived inclusive leadership when it was

utilised. The assessment of a research study's effectiveness is dependent on the reliability and validity of its results, which are the foundations of the trustworthiness, rigour, and quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003). It is essential to ensure both reliability and validity when using any data collection instruments. According to a study conducted by Johns and Miraglia in 2015, reliability is assessed by the extent to which the research characteristics demonstrate internal consistency, and the research outcomes can be replicated. The quantitative research results were analysed using the Cronbach's Alpha test, with the Google Form software being utilised.

This was conducted to assess the internal consistency level of all the respondents' responses to measure the reliability of the results. Regarding this matter, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted, and the outcome indicated a score close to 1. This finding confirms the reliability of the conducted research and serves as supporting evidence for it (Odeh, 2010).

Conversely, the concept of validity determines whether the characteristics of the research accurately measure what they are claimed to measure. Cordier et al. (2014) suggest that the content validity can be assessed by examining the population target, study concepts, study aims, selection of relevant items, and the involvement of researchers in selecting these items. The research ensured the validity of questionnaires by formulating precise questions explicitly linked to multiculturalism and inclusivity in the school environment. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the findings were statistically significant and directly relevant to the research topic, effectively addressing all the research objectives.

To maintain the internal validity of the qualitative research, the researcher made sure that the research participants possessed relevant knowledge pertaining to the study's scope. This study was conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire with the school leaders who

had a vital role in promoting inclusivity in the multicultural research context. (Creswell, 2013) asserts that the quality of qualitative research is evaluated based on its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which guarantee the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings. Methods such as triangulation, member checking, rich descriptions, audit trials, and reflexivity are employed to meet these standards (Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2013).

Beyond considering the internal validity, the significance of external validity was also acknowledged. If a study lacks external validity, it means that the findings cannot be generalised to real-life situations, rendering the study meaningless (Djamba & Neuman, 2002).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

At the forefront of any researcher's agenda is the ethical considerations associated with the research study (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). The primary ethical concerns in conducting research include obtaining informed consent, promoting beneficence, ensuring anonymity, maintaining confidentiality, and respecting privacy (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). This research has identified ethical concerns regarding the principles of openness and honesty towards the participants and their treatment as individuals of value. These concerns have been addressed through the sharing of clear explanations about the research's purpose, as well as ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the participants' data.

The school administration was consulted, and the requisite permissions and approvals were acquired. Subsequently, all the participants were requested to provide their signature on a consent form, which contained explicit explanations regarding the study's objectives and the rationale behind their selection as participants. The form also underscored the importance of maintaining confidentiality by refraining from disclosing their identities in the study. The

participants were granted the autonomy to engage as volunteers in the study and had the option to withdraw without incurring any consequences. Measures were implemented to guarantee the privacy of the participants in the teachers' survey. The participants were informed of the research objectives and were made aware that their participation was voluntary. They were also given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Every participant answered either the survey or the semi-structured questionnaire by themselves, without the researcher's influence. This would allow the precise and truthful presentation and analysis of the gathered data. Regarding beneficence, the study did not cause any harm to the respondents and their responses would be used solely for the purpose of the research.

Additionally, respect and cultural sensitivity are fundamental values in the research process. The researcher demonstrates an awareness of and respect for the participants' cultural sensitivities, values, and norms. Ensuring that the research findings contribute to a more inclusive and diverse school culture is the researcher's main goal. The study acknowledges the potential power dynamics within the school community and strives to reduce them through the establishment of an inclusive and participatory research setting. In this environment, all members are afforded an equal chance to contribute and influence the research findings, and culturally sensitive approaches are utilised to prevent inadvertent harm or offense to the participants. In summary, the ethical deliberations incorporated in this research are crucial for guaranteeing that the study fosters inclusiveness and upholds the varied values and perspectives of the participants.

3.8 Summary of the Chapter

This study investigates the impact of leadership strategies on promoting inclusivity in a private school in Dubai. The research design is a mixed-methods case study, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the dynamics impacting inclusivity within the school community. The qualitative aspect involves interviews and focus groups with leaders and stakeholders, while the quantitative aspect provides valuable numerical data. The study aims to identify significant correlations between specific leadership strategies and the perceived levels of inclusivity among teachers in the school community.

The research was conducted in an American private school in Dubai, UAE, focusing on teachers and school administrators. A semi-structured questionnaire was conducted with school leaders and administrators, while a close-ended survey was conducted with 80 teachers from various grade levels and subjects. The data were collected through the survey and semi-structured questionnaire, with a response rate of 51% for the teachers' sample.

The collected data were analysed using statistical software to consolidate the findings and detect any noteworthy patterns or trends. The study aimed to assess the methods employed by senior leaders and school principals in a private school to promote inclusivity. The data were analysed using statistical software for the quantitative data and thematic content analysis for the qualitative data.

Ethical considerations were prioritised in this research, including obtaining informed consent, promoting beneficence, ensuring anonymity, maintaining confidentiality, and respecting privacy. The participants were granted autonomy to engage as volunteers and had the option to withdraw without incurring any consequences. Respect and cultural sensitivity

were fundamental values in the research process, and the study aimed to contribute to a more inclusive and diverse school culture.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analyses

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered using both qualitative and quantitative instruments. The results for each instrument have been presented and examined individually. Subsequently, comparisons were conducted to triangulate and validate the results. The research's main aim is to evaluate the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in a private school in Dubai. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the leadership strategies currently used in a private school in Dubai regarding the diversity of the students in the research context.
2. To determine the influence of leadership strategies on fostering an inclusive school culture in the research context.
3. To propose leadership strategies that can effectively foster inclusiveness in the research context.

4.2 School Background

The chosen school is in Dubai and adheres to an American curriculum. Presently, there are 80 instructors hailing from diverse nations employed at this school. With over 40 nationalities represented, the student population for the 2023–2024 academic year amounts to 1,500. The heterogeneous composition of students and educators renders this school an appropriate choice for this research.

4.3 Quantitative Data Results

The survey has been divided into two sections: one for gathering demographic information and another for evaluating the leadership practices. Each section comprises distinct items for scrutiny. The demographic section includes information about the age, gender, grade level taught, educational qualifications, level of education, and years of teaching experience of the teachers. The second section of the survey assesses the implementation of inclusivity measures, including factors such as the teachers' satisfaction and the utilisation of best practices. The collected quantitative data offer valuable insights into the efficacy of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity within the school culture. Moreover, the data enable a comprehensive examination of the influence of diversity initiatives on the overall contentment and involvement of both educators and learners. Forty-one teachers took part in the survey. The responses and viewpoints of the teachers were analysed using statistical software based on their self-reports. The abundance, agreement, and consideration levels were assessed for each item. Subsequently, the results were categorised according to the sections of the questionnaire and displayed in tables as shown below.

4.3.1 Demographic Information

The demographic data of the participants have been gathered from the survey. The demographic information encompasses the gender, grade level taught, educational qualifications, level of education, and years of teaching experience of the teachers (Table 1).

Table 1*Demographic Information for the Participants in the Teachers' Survey*

Demographic Information	Items	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	17	17
	Female	34	83
Grade Taught Level	Primary school	15	37
	Middle school	7	17
	High school	19	46
Highest Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	26	63
	Master's Degree	13	32
	PhD/ Doctorate	2	5
	Language	13	32
Education Background	Mathematics	5	12
	Science	6	15
	Others	17	41
	Less than 5 years	15	36
Years of Teaching Experience	5-10 years	13	32
	More than 10 years	13	32
	Less than a year	10	24
Years of Teaching Experience at the Current School	1–2 years	18	44
	3–6 years	12	29
	More than 6 years	1	3

Table 1 displays the participation of the 41 teachers in the questionnaire, with 34 females (82.9%) and only 7 males (17.1%). In addition, most of the participants (63.4%) possessed a bachelor's degree, while most of the participants (31.7%) had a background in languages. Out of the total number of teachers, the largest proportion, consisting of 18 individuals (43.9%), had been teaching in their current school for 1–2 years while only one teacher (2.4%) had been teaching for more than 6 years in this school. Additionally, the largest contingent, 15 teachers (36.6%), possessed less than 5 years of teaching experience, indicating a youthful and inexperienced faculty, which could impact the execution of inclusive strategies.

Consequently, targeted professional development and support may be needed for newer staff members to foster inclusivity and diversity within the school community.

4.3.2 Leadership Strategies' Analyses

After analysing the leadership strategies employed at the American private school in Dubai, it is evident that the combination of proactive communication and inclusive decision-making processes has been instrumental in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. This section of the research examines the leadership strategies employed by teachers to foster inclusivity. The teachers' quantitative survey data have been analysed and displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Teachers' Perspective Around Leadership Strategies on Cultivating a Diverse and Inclusive School Culture

Element	Item	Respondents	Percentage %
Satisfaction with school leadership efforts	Very weak	1	2
	Weak	6	15
	Acceptable	16	39
	Good	13	32
	Very good	5	12
Effective leadership strategy or approach	Implementing regular multicultural events or celebrations	7	17
	Encouraging collaborative projects or group activities	14	34
	Incorporating multicultural literature, music, and arts into the curriculum	5	12
	Establishing buddy programmes or peer mentoring initiatives	9	22
	Providing opportunities for students to share their cultural traditions, stories, and experiences with their peers	6	14
Strategies recommended to be applied	Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their cultural competence and understanding of diverse student needs	24	59
	Establish support programmes or resources specifically designed to assist students from underrepresented or marginalised communities	19	46
	Foster a welcoming and inclusive school culture through proactive communication and community-building initiatives	11	27

Best leadership strategy or approach	Incorporate diverse perspectives and voices into the curriculum to ensure representation and inclusivity in educational materials	9	22
	Implementing diversity training and cultural competency workshops for staff and faculty	5	12
	Establishing a diversity committee or task force to address issues related to inclusivity within the school community	3	7
	Organising multicultural events, celebrations, or awareness campaigns to promote cultural understanding and appreciation	19	46
	Creating inclusive policies and procedures that address the needs of diverse student populations, such as language support programmes or accommodations for students with disabilities	11	27
	Providing resources and support for students from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds, such as scholarship opportunities or mentorship programmes	3	7

The results indicated that the educators had a positive perception of the leadership's efforts to integrate inclusive strategies. The school's efforts in fostering an inclusive environment were recognised by most of the teachers, who acknowledged the substantial progress made. More precisely, 16 teachers (39%) expressed acceptable satisfaction with the school leadership's efforts to promote an inclusive culture. Additionally, 18 teachers (44%) reported being satisfied to a good or very good extent with the school leadership's strategies in

fostering inclusivity. This means most of the teachers positively perceived the leadership's efforts to integrate inclusive strategies.

The quantitative data results highlight the crucial significance of inclusive leadership in fostering a feeling of belonging and acceptance among members of the school community. The study identified several inclusive leadership strategies that contribute to the establishment of an inclusive learning environment. More precisely, 13 teachers (34%) endorse the efficacy of promoting collaborative projects or group activities that unite students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, 9 teachers (22%) view the implementation of buddy programmes or peer mentoring initiatives as an essential leadership strategy for fostering inclusivity in the school setting by facilitating interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, (17%) of the teachers, specifically 7 individuals, hold the belief that arranging frequent multicultural events or celebrations to display the various cultures present in the school community can foster a more inclusive school environment and improve empathy and understanding among the members of the school community. These findings indicate that employing specific leadership strategies, such as collaborative projects, buddy programmes, and multicultural events, effectively promotes an inclusive school culture, with teachers giving priority to collaborative projects. According to that, through the proactive implementation of these strategies, the leadership can greatly enhance cultural inclusivity and improve the overall school environment.

However, the teachers believe that additional efforts are necessary to promote diversity and inclusivity in the school, especially through the implementation of targeted leadership strategies. Out of the entire group of educators, 24 individuals, which accounts for 59% of the group, believe that it is necessary to offer professional development opportunities to teachers

to improve their cultural competency and their understanding of the diverse needs of students. Furthermore, based on the feedback of 19 educators, constituting 46% of the participants, it is advised to create specialised support programmes or resources to aid students belonging to underrepresented or marginalised groups. Moreover, (27%) of the participants believe that there is a need to foster a welcoming and inclusive school culture through proactive communication and community-building initiatives. The findings emphasise that the teachers believe that more actions are needed to enhance diversity and inclusivity. Specifically, they suggest implementing targeted professional development and support programmes. The fact that 59% of the teachers recognise the necessity for professional development opportunities emphasises a substantial deficiency in training programmes, suggesting that numerous educators feel unprepared to effectively address the varied requirements of their students. To cultivate a more inclusive and hospitable school culture in a private school in Dubai, it will be essential to meet these needs by implementing extensive training and specialised support programmes.

Regarding the best leadership strategy or approach implemented in the private school in Dubai, the highest percentage of voting was for organising multicultural events, celebrations, or awareness campaigns. Forty-six percent of the teachers believe that organising multicultural events is the most effective implemented leadership practice for promoting diversity in a private school in Dubai. Nevertheless, this conclusion may not be universally valid in all educational settings. When implementing leadership strategies to promote inclusivity, it is essential to consider the distinct requirements and demographics of each school. Moreover, the effectiveness of multicultural events and awareness campaigns can vary depending on the degree of engagement and backing from the school community.

The American private school in Dubai has successfully implemented various leadership strategies to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere, resulting in overall teacher contentment with the achieved advancements. The study identified specific inclusive leadership strategies, such as collaborative projects, buddy programmes, and multicultural events, that enhance the inclusivity of the learning environment. Nevertheless, the educators assert that additional endeavours are required to advance diversity and inclusivity, specifically through focused leadership tactics. Most of the teachers emphasise the necessity of professional development opportunities to enhance the cultural competency and comprehension of diverse student needs. This suggests that there is a substantial deficiency in training programmes. Meanwhile, most of the teachers considered multicultural events, celebrations, or awareness campaigns as the most effective implemented leadership practice for fostering inclusivity in the research context. However, it should be noted that this approach may not be universally applicable in all educational contexts. These findings support the research objectives by showing the current leadership strategies that affect inclusivity in the school. They also identify best practices and areas that need improvement to enhance the inclusivity of the school.

4.4 Qualitative Data Results

The qualitative data findings of the study provide a deep comprehension of the complex dynamics involved in fostering inclusivity at an American private school in Dubai. The findings, obtained from semi-structured questionnaire with three key school administrators, uncover important patterns that provide insight into the achievements and challenges faced during the implementation of inclusivity initiatives in a diverse educational environment. The analysis identified four main themes: Leadership Strategies' Influence on Inclusivity,

Challenges in Implementing Inclusivity Initiatives, Impact of Inclusivity on School Culture and Student Outcomes, and Best Practices and Recommendations for Enhancing Inclusivity. These themes address important aspects of how leadership strategies impact the creation and maintenance of an inclusive school environment. They highlight the crucial importance of leadership while also revealing the practical intricacies and possibilities that come with such undertakings. The following sections will comprehensively examine these themes, offering a detailed analysis of the current state of inclusivity in the school and presenting valuable perspectives for future improvements.

4.4.1 Leadership Strategies' Influence on Inclusivity

An analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured questionnaire reveals valuable insights into the influence of leadership strategies on inclusivity within a private school in Dubai. Several pivotal leadership strategies have been recognised as necessary for fostering an inclusive culture within the school. These strategies significantly impact the atmosphere, practices, perspectives, and interactions of the students and faculty within the institution. According to the school principal, "The school's mission is to ensure every student feels welcomed, respected, and supported regardless of their background, abilities, or identities. We prioritize academic achievement for all students while ensuring equitable opportunities and resources for diverse student populations". This dedication of the school's leaders includes the implementation of policies and initiatives that endorse diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life. When discussing the role of school leadership in fostering inclusivity among the students, faculty, and families, the principal remarked, "Cultivating a culture among students, faculty, and families can be achieved through community involvement where leaders

encourage families to participate in school events such as International Day, fostering collaboration and a sense of belonging". The school has implemented leadership strategies or programmes to foster diversity and inclusivity within the school community. These strategies include the establishment of a clear vision, the implementation of policies that promote inclusivity, the promotion of staff professional development, and the cultivation of meaningful input, feedback, and collaboration in decision-making processes. The principal stated, "The first thing as a leader strategy is to set a clear and compelling vision. Developing and implementing policies that promote inclusivity. We also focus on professional development training for staff to promote inclusivity. Regarding decision making, we create opportunities for meaningful input, feedback and collaboration when making any decision".

4.4.2 Challenges in Implementing Inclusivity Initiatives

The study's qualitative data revealed significant challenges in implementing inclusivity programmes. An identified primary barrier is the resistance to change exhibited by both the staff and students. Despite ongoing training and awareness campaigns, some educators and students persist in holding deep-seated biases and preconceived notions that hinder the recognition and integration of diverse cultures in the school. This resistance often appears in subtle forms of exclusion or favouritism, which can hinder the advancement of efforts towards inclusivity. In addition, the existence of cultural differences adds further complexity to the situation. The teachers and administrators have encountered difficulties in understanding and honouring the varied cultural norms and expectations of students and their families. Achieving a harmonious school environment requires the use of sophisticated and subtle methods to reconcile these differences, which can be challenging to develop and implement. Language

barriers can significantly impede progress. The presence of students from more than 40 different nationalities can impede communication and understanding between the students and teachers due to linguistic variations. Consequently, students who lack proficiency in the primary language of instruction may face misconceptions, social isolation, and academic difficulties. According to the school counsellor, "There are number of challenges which we have encountered like Resistance to Change, some students or parents may resist efforts to promote inclusivity due to fear of change or misunderstanding about its importance. In our school we have majorly faced accommodating diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with over 40 nationalities present in our school. Language barriers present a significant hurdle as well".

4.4.3 Impact of Inclusivity on School Culture and Student Outcomes

The semi-structured questionnaire's findings indicated that inclusivity initiatives have had a notable and beneficial impact on the school culture and student outcomes at the private school in Dubai. The principal affirmed that significant advancements have been made in establishing an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere for students hailing from various cultural backgrounds. Inclusiveness has led to students experiencing a heightened sense of belonging, which has positively influenced their academic engagement and performance. The principal also emphasises that there has been an enhancement in the students' acceptance and recognition within the school, resulting in improved conduct and social interactions. Furthermore, the endeavours to promote inclusivity have cultivated a robust sense of community, enhanced the welfare of students and diminished occurrences of discrimination or exclusion. The principal expresses great satisfaction in the school's significant achievements in

fostering a diverse and inclusive atmosphere. The inclusivity initiatives have had a discernibly positive effect on the school culture, as students from diverse cultural backgrounds have expressed a heightened sense of acceptance and value. The diligent efforts and unwavering commitment of the staff have played a significant role in achieving noteworthy advancements in both the academic and social development of students. As the principal stated, "We are immensely proud of the progress our school has made in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. The positive impact of our inclusivity initiatives on school culture is evident. Students from various cultural backgrounds have reported feeling more accepted and valued, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff. Furthermore, our efforts have led to notable improvements in student outcomes, both academically and socially. The sense of belonging and community that inclusivity fosters has translated into better engagement, higher academic achievement, and improved behavior among students".

Nevertheless, the principal acknowledges the persisting difficulties, specifically in the distribution of resources and the training of staff. The school's leadership is dedicated to creating an environment where all students can thrive, which is evident in their commitment to addressing challenges and improving inclusivity practices. The principal recognises the significance of ongoing enhancement and adjustment in inclusivity strategies and values the valuable insights offered by the research. The school will persist in offering professional development opportunities for staff, improving resources, and refining policies to guarantee that each student experiences a sense of inclusion and support. As the principal stated, "we also acknowledge the challenges highlighted in fostering inclusivity and are committed to addressing them. We will continue to provide professional development for our staff, enhance our resources, and refine our policies to ensure that every student feels included and

supported. Your research has provided valuable insights that will help us in our ongoing efforts to cultivate an inclusive school culture. Thank you for shedding light on these important issues".

4.4.4 Best Practices and Recommendations for Enhancing Inclusivity

The study's qualitative data uncovered successful strategies employed to foster inclusivity, along with recommendations for further enhancement. An exemplary tradition is the yearly celebration of International Day. This event displays the school's cultural diversity by uniting the students, parents, and staff to celebrate their distinct heritages through the presentation of food, music, dance, and traditional attire. These events increase cultural awareness and appreciation, and foster a sense of belonging among students from diverse backgrounds. The activities coordinator placed strong emphasis on this event "We celebrated International Day with all communities coming together to appreciate different cultures. Significantly, International Day encourages diversity and cross-cultural interaction among staff, parents, and students. The variety of the school community is highlighted by the traditional clothing, many cuisines, music, and dance. One is encouraged to be proud of their own culture and to appreciate that of others on this occasion. By adding more cultural exchange events all year long, the school hopes to deepen the integration of diversity and inclusion ideas into its culture".

The Well-Being Department of the school has been actively conducting regular surveys among teachers, parents, and students to gather feedback on the level of inclusivity and diversity in the school's environment. These surveys provide valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of the school community, allowing the leadership to identify

areas for improvement and tailor their strategies accordingly. By involving the entire school community in these assessments, the school guarantees that its efforts to promote inclusivity are thorough and responsive to the needs of all individuals involved. As the school counsellor emphasised, "Our well-being department has conducted numerous surveys among teachers, parents, and students to gather feedback on the inclusivity and diversity climate within the school. Specific inquiries are made about their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions for improvement. The responses are then analysed to identify strengths, areas for development, and trends over time. Additionally, we have ensured that existing policies, procedures, and practices are reviewed to assess their adherence to principles of inclusivity and diversity. The effectiveness of implementing these policies is evaluated and any necessary adjustments to better support inclusivity and diversity goals are identified".

Following these established guidelines, several recommendations can be put forward to enhance inclusivity. Expanding the scope of cultural observances to include smaller, more frequent events in addition to International Day could provide continuous opportunities for cultural interaction and education. Furthermore, the implementation of targeted professional development programmes focused on cultural proficiency and inclusive teaching methods would equip teachers with the essential expertise and understanding to effectively support a diverse student body. Furthermore, the establishment of a student-led inclusivity council would actively engage students in shaping the school's efforts towards inclusivity, promoting leadership and accountability within the student body. As the school principal emphasised, "Empowering students to take the lead in promoting inclusivity and diversity within the school community. This may include endorsing student-led clubs, organisations, and events centered around topics such as social justice, fairness, and cultural understanding. Involving parents

and families in discussions and activities that promote inclusivity and diversity. This could involve organising workshops on cultural proficiency, facilitating discussion groups on identity and belonging, and engaging parents in decision-making processes regarding school policies and procedures".

Overall, the celebration of International Day and the proactive feedback mechanisms in the Well-Being Department have been instrumental in promoting inclusivity within the school. By utilising these efficient techniques and implementing the recommended strategies, the school can enhance the development of an environment where each student is valued and accepted.

4.5 Summary of the Findings

The research findings substantiate the research objectives by illustrating the present leadership strategies employed to foster inclusivity, analyse their influence within the school community, and identify the most effective practices or strategies implemented in the research context, in addition to identifying specific areas that require enhancement to improve the school's inclusivity.

The American private school in Dubai has effectively employed diverse leadership strategies to foster an inclusive environment, leading to a high level of teacher satisfaction with the achieved progress. The study identified specific inclusive leadership strategies, such as collaborative projects, buddy programmes, and multicultural events, that improve the inclusivity of the learning environment.

The results emphasise the significance of establishing an inclusive, considerate, and encouraging atmosphere for every student, irrespective of their background. Although faced

with obstacles such as resistance and linguistic obstacles, the research indicates that efforts to promote inclusivity have had a substantial, positive impact on the overall atmosphere of the school and the academic performance of the students. These initiatives have successfully cultivated a stronger sense of belonging, increased student engagement in their studies, and decreased instances of discrimination.

The teachers regarded international events, celebrations, or awareness campaigns as the most efficacious leadership practices for promoting inclusivity, although their effectiveness may vary in different educational settings.

Most educators had been employed at the school for 1–2 years and with less than five years of experience in teaching, resulting in a new and relatively inexperienced staff. This highlights the need for targeted professional development to effectively foster inclusivity. Furthermore, the findings indicate that most of the teachers place high importance on professional development opportunities to enhance their cultural competence and understanding of the diverse needs of students. This indicates a notable deficiency in training programmes, indicating an area that necessitates enhancement.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the study findings, where the results obtained from various instruments have been triangulated and compared with existing findings in the literature. The discussions have been organised as responses to the research sub-questions to accomplish the study's objectives. Subsequently, these discussions have been utilised to address the primary research inquiry and consequently accomplish the aim of the study, which is to examine the influence of leadership strategies on cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment in a private US curriculum school in Dubai, UAE. Afterwards, the chapter proceeds to stitch together the conclusion, emphasise the constraints, and propose recommendations. Furthermore, it paves the way for future research in the identical domain.

The American private school in Dubai has successfully implemented diverse leadership strategies to promote inclusivity, resulting in high teacher satisfaction. These strategies include collaborative projects, buddy programmes, and multicultural events. Despite challenges like resistance and linguistic barriers, these initiatives have improved the school's atmosphere and academic performance. The teachers regarded international events as the most effective leadership practices for promoting inclusivity. However, the school's inexperienced staff, with a focus on professional development, highlights the need for enhancement in training programmes to increase the cultural competence and understanding of diverse student needs.

5.2 Discussion

The findings from the qualitative data highlight the crucial importance of inclusive leadership strategies in fostering a feeling of belonging and acceptance among members of the school community. These indicate that the implementation of inclusivity initiatives at a private school in Dubai has had a significant and positive effect on both the school culture and student outcomes. Substantial progress has been achieved in creating an environment that is welcoming and supportive for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The promotion of inclusiveness has resulted in students developing a heightened feeling of belonging, which positively impacted their academic engagement and performance. The findings highlight an increase in the students' acceptance and recognition within the school, leading to improved behaviour and social interactions. Moreover, the efforts to foster inclusivity have nurtured a strong sense of community, improved the well-being of students, and reduced instances of discrimination or exclusion. These results have agreed with those of Pozas et al. (2021), who debated that an inclusive culture primarily benefits the staffing and faculty; it involves establishing a setting where the distinctiveness of each person is acknowledged and honoured. For instance, by accommodating diverse languages, cultures, family arrangements, and individual interests, and by creating a curriculum that includes a broad array of instructional and educational components, we can effectively meet the needs of all students and staff members. An inclusive culture in school is closely correlated with educational achievement. Moreover, Lohbeck (2020) stated that there is ample evidence that students' self-perception, drive, and achievement are improved in schools where all students feel a sense of ownership.

The study uncovered three main inclusive leadership strategies that contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment in the school. Firstly, an important discovery was the effectiveness of encouraging collaborative projects or group activities that bring together students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Secondly, establishing buddy programmes or peer mentoring initiatives to facilitate interactions between students from diverse cultural backgrounds has proven to be a successful leadership approach in promoting inclusivity in the American private school in Dubai. Similarly, these results have agreed with those of Lakkala et al. (2021), who debated that promoting collaborative learning and group work can foster an appreciation for diverse perspectives and enhance students' ability to effectively collaborate with peers from various backgrounds. It fosters the development of crucial abilities like empathy, communication, and teamwork, which are necessary for cultivating an inclusive school culture.

Thirdly, implementing regular multicultural events or celebrations to highlight diverse cultures represented within the school community can foster a more inclusive school environment, thereby promoting empathy and understanding within the school community. This finding aligns with Brottman et al. (2020), Tristani and Bassett-Gunter (2020), and Fuentes et al.'s (2021) findings, where these studies stated that schools can organise workshops and events that promote and honour cultural diversity, thereby facilitating interaction and comprehension among diverse cultural groups. This not only aids students but also fosters a more comprehensive school community.

Most educators at the school had a tenure of 1–2 years and possessed less than five years of teaching experience, leading to a staff that was new and relatively inexperienced. This emphasises the necessity of specific and focused training to successfully promote

inclusiveness. Moreover, the teachers' survey results indicate that most of the teachers prioritise professional development opportunities to improve their cultural competence and comprehension of the varied requirements of students. This highlights a significant inadequacy in training programmes, indicating an area that requires improvement by the school leadership. To address this issue, the school leadership must give the highest priority to the execution of extensive and continuous professional development programmes specifically designed to enhance cultural competency. This would provide teachers with the essential expertise and understanding to cultivate a more inclusive and supportive school environment, ultimately benefiting a diverse student population.

These findings reflect previous research that has shown that insufficient professional development can result in difficulties in effectively implementing inclusive practices (Schipper et al., 2020). The importance that teachers place on professional development opportunities highlights the need for school leaders to invest in extensive training programmes that focus on cultural competence. This is supported by the research of Eden et al. (2024), who emphasised the value of thorough professional development in equipping teachers with the necessary skills for culturally responsive teaching.

Moreover, research conducted by Brottman et al. (2020) has demonstrated that the effective implementation of culturally responsive teaching necessitates educators who possess a profound comprehension of their students' cultural backgrounds, a feat that can only be accomplished through focused professional development. This is especially pertinent in the setting of the American private school in Dubai, where the student population is composed of over 40 nationalities, requiring the teaching staff to possess a strong level of cultural competence.

Creating a harmonious school environment necessitates the utilisation of sophisticated and nuanced approaches to resolve these disparities, which can be difficult to formulate and execute. The study findings unveiled numerous obstacles encountered in the research context. Educators and students face biases that hinder the integration of diverse cultures in educational institutions, often leading to exclusion or favouritism, and the complexity of understanding and respecting these social norms is significant. This is supported by the research of Ray (2023), who emphasised that progress can be impeded by stakeholders' resistance to change or their lack of awareness regarding the significance of inclusivity.

The presence of language barriers, especially among students representing more than 40 different nationalities, can hinder progress, resulting in misunderstandings, social exclusion, and academic challenges for individuals who do not possess adequate proficiency in the primary language used for teaching. The findings align with those of Ray (2023) and Abacioglu et al. (2020), as they indicated that challenges could stem from varied factors, such as systemic inequalities, cultural biases, and limited resources. Meeting the unique needs of students from various cultural backgrounds and abilities can be a complex task, necessitating meticulous planning and customised interventions. Obstacles to fostering inclusivity may arise from language barriers, socio-economic disparities, and discriminatory attitudes.

The study findings emphasise an effective approach to promoting inclusivity in the research setting, which involves organising an annual celebration called International Day. Both the teachers and leaders emphasised this event as the best practice of cultivating diversity and inclusivity in the American private school in Dubai. This event brings together students, parents, and staff to commemorate their cultural heritage through the sharing of food, music,

dance, and traditional clothing, thereby enhancing cultural awareness and nurturing a feeling of belonging.

Brottman et al.'s (2020) research emphasises the significance of multicultural education activities, such as cultural celebrations, in cultivating an inclusive school culture. These activities promote respect and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. These events have been demonstrated to improve cultural awareness and foster students' appreciation for the diversity present in their school community, thereby promoting a sense of belonging and inclusivity (Brottman et al., 2020).

However, the effectiveness of these endeavours may fluctuate depending on the school's specific context. According to Tristani and Bassett-Gunter (2020) and Fuentes et al. (2021), the effectiveness of multicultural education programmes is contingent upon the active engagement and endorsement of the entire school community, encompassing teachers, students, and parents. This highlights the importance of customising these events to suit the specific requirements and characteristics of the school, guaranteeing that they are inclusive and captivating for all participants.

The results of this study emphasise the importance of employing inclusive leadership strategies to foster a diverse and inclusive school environment. An especially efficient strategy recognised is the establishment of an annual International Day.

However, to maintain and improve these inclusive practices, school leaders must actively participate in consistent self-reflection and critical analysis. Weinberg et al. (2020) found a strong correlation between critical reflection and the achievement of successful and enduring organisational change. It promotes an outward-looking mindset (see Appendix A) and a continuous drive to improve and learn from the external environment (Weinberg et al.,

2020). Through the deliberate practice of self-reflection and critical reflection, school leaders can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics within their school community, identify areas that require improvement, and formulate strategies that are tailored to meet the diverse needs of their students and staff.

For instance, the feedback received from teachers in this study emphasises the need for professional development opportunities to improve cultural competency. The existence of a need for specific training programmes indicates a gap that can be addressed by implementing reflective practices. School leaders can enhance the effectiveness of professional development initiatives in promoting inclusivity by conducting a thorough evaluation of their current strategies and actively seeking external insights.

5.3 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the influence of leadership approaches on the establishment of a diverse and inclusive educational setting in an American private school located in Dubai. The study findings emphasise the essential importance of employing inclusive leadership strategies to establish a welcoming and supportive school environment for students hailing from various cultural backgrounds. The implementation of initiatives such as collaborative projects, buddy programmes, and multicultural events has significantly enhanced the overall atmosphere and academic achievements of a private school in Dubai. Although there has been progress, the findings emphasise the necessity of targeted professional development to tackle the relatively inexperienced teaching staff and enhance their cultural competence. Obstacles such as biases, linguistic obstacles, and structural inequities persist, necessitating ongoing and concentrated efforts from the educational administrators. The study

advocates the annual celebration of International Day as a crucial tactic to foster inclusiveness. Nevertheless, this initiative's effectiveness depends on the specific context of the school and the entire school community's enthusiastic involvement. To maintain and improve leadership practices of cultivating inclusivity, school leaders must regularly engage in self-reflection and critical analysis. They should ensure professional development programmes are carefully customised to address their students' diverse needs. By implementing this approach, educational institutions can cultivate a genuinely inclusive culture where all students feel valued and supported.

5.4 Limitations and Recommendations

It is important to consider the limitations of the study when interpreting the results, as they provide opportunities for future research. Initially, the study's scope is restricted as it was exclusively carried out in a solitary private educational institution following the American curriculum in Dubai. Additionally, employing stratified random sampling, which involves grouping participants prior to sampling, could have been a more advantageous choice compared to simple random sampling. The latter method may inadvertently exclude certain groups or sample certain individuals multiple times, thereby introducing potential errors in the process of drawing conclusions. The study aimed to investigate the perceived level of inclusivity, as reported by the teachers in the survey and the leaders in the semi-structured questionnaires in the research context, making it difficult to generalise the findings. However, the findings could serve as an initial reference for future investigations in the United Arab Emirates. The findings can help educational leaders and policymakers strategise and create development programmes and courses that foster an inclusive learning environment through

effective leadership. Furthermore, employing a longitudinal research methodology that assesses students' perceptions at various academic stages and intervals over the course of the year could yield a more comprehensive understanding of the correlations between diverse leadership factors and inclusivity. To address the current constraints, forthcoming studies could prioritise the creation and verification of a widely recognised metric for inclusivity. This metric would be utilised to assess the effectiveness of leadership approaches in various educational environments characterised by diversity. Moreover, conducting experimental research to manipulate various leadership strategies and observe their effects on inclusivity could improve our comprehension of how to promote an inclusive learning environment through leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

The Outward-Looking Approach

An outward-looking approach refers to a mindset or strategy that prioritises actively engaging with the external environment. It involves seeking opportunities that extend beyond one's immediate context and being receptive to innovative ideas, collaborations, and global perspectives. It promotes the exploration of international markets, the establishment of cross-cultural relationships, and the acquisition of knowledge about global trends for organisations, individuals, and communities.

Culture Clash: Meaning and Consequences

A culture clash occurs when individuals with divergent cultural values, beliefs, and practices interact, leading to conflict. These conflicts frequently arise due to disparities in social norms, customs, behaviors, communication styles, and values. Cultural conflicts in an educational environment can result in substantial difficulties. Miscommunication frequently occurs when students and staff have divergent cultural communication styles, leading to a lack of mutual comprehension. This can lead to a sense of alienation for students whose cultural backgrounds are not comprehended or valued, and may escalate into confrontations among students and between students and staff. The educational consequences can be significant, as the process of acquiring knowledge may be interrupted if cultural conflicts give rise to a hostile or uncomfortable atmosphere. In order to mitigate culture clashes, it is imperative to foster cultural consciousness, enact inclusive policies, establish support mechanisms for students encountering cultural adaptation difficulties, and foster an environment that encourages open and respectful

discourse regarding cultural disparities. The objective is to cultivate an all-encompassing atmosphere in which cultural diversity is acknowledged and esteemed, consequently reducing the likelihood of cultural conflicts and fostering unity and reciprocal comprehension.

Appendix B

1. Semi-structured questionnaire's questions

Questions

Kindly respond to the following questions:

1. Can you provide an overview of the school's mission and values regarding inclusivity and diversity?
2. How does the school define and prioritize inclusivity within its educational philosophy and practices?
3. What leadership strategies or initiatives has the school implemented to promote inclusivity and diversity within the school community?
4. How do you perceive the role of school leadership in fostering a culture of inclusivity among students, staff, and families?
5. Can you share specific examples of successful initiatives or programs aimed at promoting inclusivity within the school?
6. How does the school address instances of discrimination or bias and promote a culture of respect and acceptance?
7. What challenges have you encountered in promoting inclusivity within the school, and how have you addressed or overcome these challenges?

8. How do you assess the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity and diversity within the school community?
9. What role do teachers and staff play in supporting the school's efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity?
10. Looking ahead, what future initiatives or plans does the school have in place to further enhance inclusivity and diversity within the school community?

2. Survey's Questions

The following are some of the questions of the teacher survey:

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the extent to which you believe leadership in our school actively promotes cultural inclusivity. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
very weak	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	very good

Which specific leadership strategies or initiatives do you perceive as most effective in fostering cultural inclusivity within our school? (you can choose more than one) *

- ☐ Implementing diversity training programs for staff and students.
- ☐ Creating multicultural clubs or affinity groups to celebrate different cultures.
- ☐ Incorporating diverse perspectives and voices into the curriculum.
- ☐ Establishing mentorship programs for students from diverse backgrounds.
- ☐ Providing resources and support for English language learners.

How satisfied are you with the efforts of school leadership to promote an inclusive culture within our school? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly unsatisfied	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly satisfied.

Can you provide examples of ways in which school leadership has demonstrated a commitment to fostering inclusivity? *

- ☐ Implementing diversity training and cultural competency workshops for staff and faculty.
- ☐ Establishing a diversity committee or task force to address issues related to inclusivity within the school community.
- ☐ Organizing multicultural events, celebrations, or awareness campaigns to promote cultural understanding and appreciation.
- ☐ Creating inclusive policies and procedures that address the needs of diverse student populations, such as language support programs or accommodations for students with disabilities.
- ☐ Providing resources and support for students from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds, such as scholarship opportunities or mentorship programs.

How do you believe the diverse student population in our school impacts the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity? *

- ☐ Positively: The diverse student population enriches our school community and provides opportunities for learning from different cultural perspectives, enhancing the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity.
- ☐ Negatively: The diverse student population presents challenges in effectively addressing the needs and concerns of all students, which may hinder the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity.
- ☐ Both positively and negatively: While the diverse student population brings valuable diversity to our school community, it also poses challenges that need to be addressed by leadership to ensure inclusivity for all students.
- ☐ No impact: The diverse student population does not significantly affect the effectiveness of leadership strategies in fostering inclusivity within our school community.

In what ways do you think school leadership can better address the needs of our diverse student body? (you can choose more than one) *

- ☐ Implement culturally responsive teaching practices tailored to meet the diverse learning styles and backgrounds of students.
- ☐ Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their cultural competence and understanding of diverse student needs.
- ☐ Establish support programs or resources specifically designed to assist students from underrepresented or marginalized communities.
- ☐ Foster a welcoming and inclusive school culture through proactive communication and community-building initiatives.
- ☐ Incorporate diverse perspectives and voices into the curriculum to ensure representation and inclusivity in educational materials.

What strategies or approaches do you believe would be most effective in promoting meaningful intercultural contacts and discourse within our school community? *

- ☐ Implementing regular multicultural events or celebrations to highlight different cultures represented within the school community.
- ☐ Encouraging collaborative projects or group activities that bring together students from different cultural backgrounds.
- ☐ Incorporating multicultural literature, music, and arts into the curriculum to foster appreciation for diverse cultures.
- ☐ Establishing buddy programs or peer mentoring initiatives to facilitate interactions between students from different cultural backgrounds.
- ☐ Providing opportunities for students to share their cultural traditions, stories, and experiences with their peers.